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CANADA, NOVA SCOTIA AND FIRST NATIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS ON FIRST NATIONS CHILD WELFARE

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Membertou, Nova Scotia, June 27, 2007 - The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, the Honourable Judy Streatch, Nova Scotia Minister of Community Services and Minister responsible for the Disabled Persons' Commission Act, the Honourable Michael Baker, Nova Scotia Minister of Finance and Aboriginal Affairs and Chief Lawrence Paul, President, Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services of Nova Scotia today announced that their respective governments have agreed to work together to introduce early intervention/prevention services for First Nations Child and Family Services on reserves in Nova Scotia.

"I feel confident that by working in partnership with provinces and First Nations, we can achieve many important concrete improvements in the delivery of child and family services for First Nations children and their families," Minister Prentice said. "This is an area that requires immediate attention and will have an impact on our collective future as Canadians."

On April 27, 2007, INAC entered into a partnership with Alberta and Treaty First Nations to implement a new approach to First Nations child and family services that is based on early intervention and prevention. Over the next year, the First Nations Child and Family Service agencies in Alberta will implement the Alberta Response Model which has proven successful in both First Nations and non-First Nations communities.

The Honourable Judy Streatch said, "We owe it to the First Nation children and their families to strengthen early intervention services and supports so children can continue to remain with their families whenever possible." The Honourable Michael Baker stated, "This is a tremendous opportunity for the provincial and federal governments to work alongside the First Nations community to ensure we are providing children and families quality programs and services that are easy to access."

"We are looking forward to working with the Province of Nova Scotia and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to improve conditions for our First Nations children and youth" said Chief Lawrence Paul. "It represents an opportunity for Canada and Nova Scotia to join us as we travel a path to healing and a better way of life, beginning with our youth."

"Canada's New Government is committed to working with First Nations, provincial and territorial leaders to improve the living conditions of First Nations people," stated Minister Prentice. "We are proud to continue to support First Nations in developing healthy, prosperous communities."

For further information please contact:

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Deirdra McCracken
Press Secretary
Office of the Honourable Jim Prentice
819-997-0002

Joan Glode
Executive Director
Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services of Nova Scotia
1-800-263-8686 or (902) 758-3553

Allison MacLellan
Senior Policy Advisor to
Minister Judy Streatch
Department of Community Services
(902) 424-7618

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